

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application or previous response to office action:

1-25. (Cancelled)

26. (Currently Amended) A vending machine comprising:
vending hardware;
a vending machine controller operably coupled to the vending hardware;
an electronically controllable lock;
an addressable switch connected to the electronically controllable lock and
operable to engage or disengage the electronically controllable lock;
an audit device having a communications interface operably coupled to the vending machine controller and in communication with the electronically controllable lock by means
of the addressable switch;
the audit device having a secure application module contained within the audit
device and operable to store an encryption key;
the audit device operable to receive an unlock command from a handheld computer via the communications interface and send a predetermined signal to the addressable
switch causing the addressable switch to unlock the vending machine in response to receiving the unlock command from the handheld computer, wherein the encryption key is
used to authorize the unlock command received from the handheld computer;
the audit device operable to automatically collect transaction data and to store timestamps with the transaction data to maintain an audit trail of transactions occurring at the vending machine; and
the audit device operable to automatically collect and store electronic lock access data.

27. (Original) The vending machine of Claim 26, further comprising:
a cashless media device operable to enable a cashless vending transaction; and
the audit device operable to permit communication of a record associated with a
cashless vending transaction to the handheld computer.

28. (Original) The vending machine of Claim 27, further comprising the audit
device operable to initiate collection on accounts for a cashless vending transaction via
transmission of the transaction records to the handheld computer followed by transmission of
the cashless transaction records to at least one agency responsible on the accounts via the
handheld computer.

29. (Original) The vending machine of Claim 27, further comprising the audit
device operable to permit direct communication between the handheld computer and the
cashless media device.

30. (Cancelled)

31. (Currently Amended) The vending machine of Claim 26 [[30]], further
comprising the audit trail including transactions between the handheld computer and the audit
device.

32. (Cancelled)

33. (Original) The vending machine of Claim 26, further comprising a security
application module operable to effect at least one authorization verification with the handheld
before permitting a handheld computer transaction.

34. (Previously Presented) The vending machine of Claim 26, further comprising
the audit device operable to obtain transaction data recorded by the vending machine
controller for storage in an audit device memory.

35. (Currently Amended) A vending machine comprising:

a vending machine controller operably coupled to an electronically controllable lock;

the electronically controllable lock operable to be engaged and disengaged;

an audit device having a communications interface operably coupled to the vending machine controller and in communication with the electronically controllable lock;

the audit device operable to receive an unlock command from a handheld computer via the communications interface to disengage the electronically controllable lock and provide access to internal components of the vending machine in response to receiving the unlock command from the handheld computer;

the audit device operable to permit communication of a record associated with a cashless vending transaction to the handheld computer;

the audit device operable to initiate collection on accounts for a cashless vending transaction via transmission of the transaction records to the handheld computer followed by transmission of the cashless transaction records to at least one agency responsible on the accounts via the handheld computer;

the audit device operable to maintain an audit trail of transactions occurring at the vending machine including operation of the electronically controllable lock; and

security keys maintained by the audit device in a secure application module to effect at least one authorization verification with the handheld computer before permitting a handheld computer transaction.

36. (Currently Amended) A vending machine comprising:

vending hardware operable to accept cash and non-cash payment tokens at the vending machine;

the vending machine hardware including at least one inventory dispensing apparatus;

a vending machine controller operably coupled to the vending hardware;

an electronically controllable lock;

an audit device having a communications interface operably coupled to the vending machine controller and in communication with the electronically controllable lock, the audit device operable to receive an unlock command from a handheld computer via the communications interface and unlock the vending machine in response to receiving the unlock command from the handheld computer;

the audit device operable to permit communication of a record associated with a cashless vending transaction to the handheld computer;

the audit device operable to initiate collection on accounts for a cashless vending transaction via transmission of the transaction records to the handheld computer followed by transmission of the cashless transaction records to at least one agency responsible on the accounts via the handheld computer;

the audit device operable to maintain an audit trail of transactions occurring at the vending machine including operation of the electronically controllable lock; and

the audit device having a secure application module operable to store at least one security key and to effect at least one authorization verification with the handheld before permitting a handheld computer transaction.